
— THE SELF-MANAGING BUSINESS · THE PROJECT FRAMEWORK

GETTING NEW IDEAS EXECUTED

The critical questions to ask before starting any new project.

— DR. PHILIP ZIMMERMANN

I The Shower Idea

The average person gets a great idea in the shower. Then they towel off, get dressed, and forget about it before breakfast. Nothing happens. The idea dies quietly. No harm done.

An entrepreneur is built differently. An entrepreneur gets new ideas before the shower, during the shower, and after the shower. And by the time the hair is dry, the entrepreneur has already messaged the team. “Drop everything. This is the new priority.”

That instinct is not a flaw. It is the engine. It is the reason you have a business and most people do not. You see opportunity where others see a normal Tuesday.

I The Shower Idea

But here is the truth nobody tells you. The same instinct that built your company is also the thing that at some point adds a lot of confusion and actually slows things down.

Here is what that looks like in real life. You delegate without clarity, and your team comes back with a hundred questions. What did you mean by this. Who owns that. What is the budget. By when. And it irritates you like heck. But the questions are not the problem. The missing clarity is.

*Today I want to show you why.
And I want to give you a simple
Project Framework that fixes it.*

II The Idea Is Not the Problem

Let me be clear about something. The idea is rarely the problem.

The problem is what happens in the next ten minutes. You take a raw, half-formed idea, still warm from the shower, and you hand it straight to your team. You think you are delegating. You think you are empowering people.

You are not. You are handing them a riddle and asking them to guess the answer.

How many of you have launched something on Monday that the whole team was excited about, and by Friday nobody could agree on what you were actually building?

*That is not a team problem.
That is a clarity problem. And
clarity is your job, not theirs.*

When you delegate an idea instead of a defined project, you are not freeing your people. You are setting a trap. Three smart people hear the same sentence from you and walk away with three different projects in their heads. They all start working. They all work hard. And they all build slightly different things. Then you wonder why the launch was a mess.

III Why Delegating Too Fast Creates Chaos

Here is what really happens when you delegate too fast.

You say “go.” Your team starts moving. But you never defined the destination. So everyone aims at a slightly different target. The marketer optimizes for leads. The operator optimizes for a clean process. The salesperson optimizes for a quick win. Everyone is rowing hard. Nobody is rowing the same direction.

That is chaos. And chaos is expensive. It costs you in rework. It costs you in wasted weeks. It costs you in trust, because your team starts to feel like the goalposts move every time you walk into the room.

And here is the part that stings. Your team is not the problem. You are. You moved faster than your own thinking. You delegated before you decided.

You believe speed is the same as progress. So you push the idea out fast to feel productive.

*But speed without clarity is
just motion. And motion is
not the same as movement
toward something.*

A self-managing business does not run on your energy. It runs on clarity. The day you stop being the bottleneck is the day your projects start with a definition instead of an impulse.

So the goal is not to kill the shower idea. The goal is to slow down for thirty minutes so your team can move fast for three months. That is why you need a Project Framework.

IV What Goes Wrong Without a Frame

Let me name the failure modes you already know in your gut. Every project that went sideways had at least one of these.

- ◇ There was no agreed definition of done. So the project never ended. It just sort of faded out, unfinished, while everyone quietly moved on.
- ◇ There was no owner. Everyone was responsible, which means nobody was.
- ◇ There was no budget. So it ate time and money you never planned to spend.
- ◇ There was no shared picture of success. So your team called it a win and you called it a flop, and you were both right, because nobody ever wrote down what winning looked like.

Notice the pattern. None of these are talent problems. They are framing problems. The work was fine. The frame was missing.

 THE POSTURE

*You are the patron
of every project
in your company.
Act like one.*

V Walk Through the Project Framework

So let me show you how the Project Framework removes the chaos and give you context why each section is important.

The top section answers “who and what.” Project Name. Project Leader. Project Manager. Project Budget. This looks basic. It is not. Most chaos starts right here, because most projects launch without a single clear owner and without a number on the spend. The Leader carries the vision. The Manager runs the execution. The Budget tells the truth. Fill these in and half your future arguments disappear. (Now if you do not have a leader or a manager, you have to put your name down.)

Then Project Goal. What do you want to achieve. Write it down in plain terms. If you cannot put the goal into words, you do not have a project yet. You have a feeling. Feelings are not delegatable.

Project Background. This is where you give your team the context you have in your head and they do not. They cannot read your mind. Write down why this matters now and how it connects to everything else. Context is what lets people make good decisions when you are not in the room. And the whole point is to not be in the room.

Project Impact. What is the biggest difference this project will make. This is the filter. If the honest answer is “not much,” you just saved yourself three months. Kill it here, on paper, where it is cheap.

V Walk Through the Project Framework

Now the most important part. Success Criteria. What must be true once this project is complete. Write it in plain bullets. This is the finish line. This is the difference between a project that ends and a project that haunts you. When the team knows exactly what “done” looks like, they stop guessing and start delivering.

Then look at the last page. Successful Outcomes. In the best case, what does this look like. Let yourself dream here. Let the team see the prize.

And then Unsuccessful Outcomes. Describe what happens if this does not go the way you imagine today. This is the one everyone wants to skip. Do not skip it. This is your pre-mortem. You are looking at the failure before it happens, while you still have time to prevent it.

That is the whole Project Framework. Top to bottom, it takes about twenty minutes to fill out well. Twenty minutes. Compare that to the cost of three months of a confused team building the wrong thing.

VI The Discipline

So here is the rule I want you to leave with.

*Do not delegate the idea.
Delegate the framed project.*

The next time you get the shower idea, do not message the team. Stop and fill out the Project Framework first. Sit with it. Then bring your team a project, not a riddle.

This is not bureaucracy. This is the opposite. One clean framework now is what prevents fifty messy meetings later.

And remember this. Clarity is kindness. When you hand your team a fully framed project, you are respecting their time, their intelligence, and their need to win. You are telling them exactly what the target is, and then you are getting out of the way.

Look at the trade honestly. It costs you twenty minutes to get clarity. The alternative costs you hours of your team building in the fog. Lots of back and forth. Lots of rework. And the biggest cost of all, the opportunity cost, the important thing they were not working on because they were chasing your half-formed idea. Twenty minutes of your thinking buys back weeks of their execution.

That is what a self-managing business is. A team with more clarity.

*Now begin. Frame the project before you
delegate it.*

THE PROJECT FRAMEWORK →

A PLANNING INSTRUMENT FOR SIGNIFICANT WORK

PROJECT FRAMEWORK

Clarity before the work begins. Name the project, define the goal, and decide – in advance – what success and failure will look like.

PROJECT NAME

PROJECT LEADER

PROJECT BUDGET

PROJECT MANAGER

I Project Goal

What do you want to achieve?

- ◇

- ◇

- ◇

- ◇

II Project Description

The context and the consequence – why this project matters, and what it changes.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Gather some background information. It should explain the broader context.

- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____

PROJECT IMPACT

What is the biggest difference your project will make?

- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____



III Project Success

SUCCESS CRITERIA

What must be true once this project is complete?

- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____

IV Project Outcome

SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES

In the best case, what does the completed project look like?

- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____

UNSUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES

Describe the outcomes if the project does not go the way you imagine today.

- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____
- ◇ _____